EPA Green Infrastructure Program
Request for Letters of Interest

OVERVIEW

This request for letters of interest (RLI) announces the availability of direct assistance (through EPA contract support) for projects that facilitate the use of green infrastructure to protect water quality. Technical assistance will be directed to watersheds/sewersheds with significant water quality degradation associated with urban stormwater. Assistance may be offered to communities with any level of green infrastructure implementation. Direct assistance will result in one or more of the following outcomes:

- A quantitative assessment of the water quality and other environmental benefits associated with green infrastructure scenarios;
- A qualitative assessment of the barriers posed by local codes and ordinances to green infrastructure approaches;
- Development of design guidance that identifies an appropriate suite of green infrastructure practices for a particular site or context;
- Evaluation of opportunities to use green infrastructure to address multiple wet weather programs (e.g. MS4, SSO, CSO).

The total EPA assistance available through this RLI is approximately $950,000. EPA anticipates selecting 10-20 projects to receive assistance. The value of the assistance available to each project will be approximately $50,000 - $100,000. Each applicant may submit only one letter of interest, and may apply for project periods of up to 18 months. Letters should be submitted by email to Kloss.Christopher@epa.gov. Letters of interest must be received by April 6, 2012, 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET).

DESCRIPTION OF AVAILABLE ASSISTANCE

Why is EPA offering this assistance?

Stormwater discharges from separate or combined sewer systems can lead to significant water quality impairment and habitat degradation. While current practice emphasizes the use of end-of-pipe stormwater controls (e.g. extended detention ponds) to treat urban stormwater discharges and reduce peak flows, research and experience have shown that end-of-pipe controls alone offer limited treatment capacity and limited mitigation of habitat degradation.

Green infrastructure uses infiltration, evapotranspiration, and rainwater harvesting to reduce and manage stormwater at its source. By retaining rainwater on site, green infrastructure reduces the quantity of untreated stormwater discharged to surface waters, and adds capacity to combined and separate sewer systems by subtracting demand. Green infrastructure can also provide a variety of community benefits, including improved air quality, increased property values, energy savings, reduced urban heat island effect, and green jobs. Given the multiple benefits associated with green infrastructure, EPA encourages the use of green approaches to stormwater runoff and

sewer overflow management to the maximum extent possible. For more information on EPA's green infrastructure program, see www.epa.gov/greeninfrastructure.

Stormwater experts have developed an extensive knowledge base on the evaluation and implementation of green infrastructure approaches, but current practice lags behind the state of the science. Many tools are available to assist communities in developing green infrastructure strategies that meet community goals as well as Clean Water Act requirements. Available tools include:

- Hydrologic and hydraulic models that predict the water quantity and quality impacts of green infrastructure scenarios (e.g. SWMM LID);
- Methodologies for quantifying the range of benefits associated with green infrastructure approaches (e.g. The Value of Green Infrastructure);
- Tools for identifying the barriers posed by local codes and ordinances (e.g. EPA's Water Quality Scorecard); and
- Design guides for integrating appropriate green infrastructure controls into site designs (e.g. EPA's Stormwater Guidelines for Green, Dense Redevelopment)

Many communities, however, lack the resources to take advantage of these tools. EPA is offering this assistance to help communities interested in implementing green infrastructure apply these and similar tools to their particular context and develop a strategy for implementing green infrastructure. EPA hopes that this assistance will ultimately result in models that other communities can follow.

How will this assistance be provided?
EPA will provide assistance through an Agency contract, not through a grant. The assistance provided will be entirely in the form of work from contractors paid by EPA.

What types of projects will this assistance support?
This assistance will support a range of projects that facilitate the use of green infrastructure to protect water quality. Though EPA expects proposed projects to be tailored to the communities requesting assistance, proposed projects should include one or more of the following elements:

- *A quantitative assessment of the water quality and other environmental benefits associated with green infrastructure scenarios*: Though many communities recognize the wide range of benefits associated with green infrastructure, community leaders may be uncertain of the magnitude of the benefits provided and may be reluctant to act in the absence of quantitative data. EPA will assist communities in developing hydrologic and hydraulic models to quantify the water quality benefits of green infrastructure, as well as complementary models to quantify other environmental benefits (e.g. improved air quality). Models applied may include but are not limited to SWMM, SUSTAIN, and The Value of Green Infrastructure.

- *A qualitative assessment of the barriers posed by local codes and permitting processes to green infrastructure approaches*: State and local codes and permitting processes often pose the most significant barrier to the implementation of green infrastructure by discouraging non-structural stormwater controls and restricting the use of stormwater. EPA

will provide assistance to communities interested in conducting tailored reviews of relevant codes and ordinances to identify barriers to green infrastructure and appropriate revisions. Relevant codes and ordinances may include building codes, plumbing codes, zoning rules, subdivision rules, and local stormwater ordinances. Audit tools that may be applied include the Center for Watershed Protection's Code and Ordinance Worksheet or EPA's Water Quality Scorecard.

- *Development of design guidance that identifies an appropriate suite of green infrastructure practices for a particular site or context*: Unfamiliarity with green infrastructure concepts and a lack of appropriate "off-the-shelf" design guides may impede the adoption of green infrastructure in communities with limited experience. EPA will provide assistance to communities interested in developing conceptual designs for a particular site or context. Design assistance may range from the development of 50% conceptual designs for a demonstration project, to the development of a design guide addressing local physical constraints. For example, EPA's Stormwater Guidelines for Green, Dense Redevelopment assessed local physical constraints and their design implications in the city of Emeryville, California, and described a suite of appropriate green infrastructure solutions. Similarly, EPA's Conceptual Guide to Effective Green Streets Design Solutions assessed space and safety constraints for a range of street types and described a set of appropriate green solutions for each type.

- *Evaluation of opportunities to use green infrastructure to address multiple wet weather programs (e.g. MS4, SSO, CSO):* Wet weather compliance programs often focus on each CWA requirement individually without full consideration of all CWA obligations. This approach may have the unintended consequence of constraining a municipality from addressing, in a cost-effective manner, its most serious water quality issues first. In October 2011, EPA released a memo indicating its intent to work with communities to develop an integrated planning and permitting process. EPA is also developing a framework for the principles and components of an integrated plan. An integrated planning process has the potential to identify a prioritized critical path to achieving the water quality objectives of the CWA by identifying efficiencies in implementing multiple requirements that arise from separate wastewater and stormwater projects, including capital investments and operation and maintenance requirements. EPA will provide assistance to communities interested in developing an integrated stormwater and wastewater plan that uses green infrastructure solutions to address prioritized water quality objectives.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Any combination of local government department, office, agency or non-profit may submit a letter of interest. Note that only one letter of interest should be submitted per applicant. While applicants are not required to demonstrate community partnerships, EPA recognizes that strong community partnerships are important in implementing green infrastructure approaches.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

When are letters of interest due?

Applicants must submit their letters of interest via email to Kloss.Christopher@epa.gov by April 6, 2012, 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET).

What information should letters of interest provide?

Letters of interest must provide all of the information detailed in this section. Any letters that do not provide all of this information will not be reviewed.

1) Cover Page
   - Applicant Identification: Provide the name and full address of the entity applying for EPA assistance.
   - Location: Provide city, county, and state of the area where the proposed project is located.
   - Wet Weather Programs: Briefly describe whether the applicant is a permitted stormwater Phase I/II MS4, has combined sewer systems, or has sanitary sewer overflows.
   - Contacts:
     i) Project Director: Provide the name, phone number, email address, and mailing address of the project director assigned to the proposed project. This person will be responsible for working with EPA staff to answer questions and provide additional information as the application process proceeds.
     ii) Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Official: Provide the name, phone number, email address, and mailing address of the applicant's Chief Executive (e.g., mayor of a city, executive director of a nonprofit, etc.). This person may be contacted if further information is needed.
     iii) Key Project Partners: Provide names and phone numbers of **key** individuals and organizations that have agreed to participate in the proposed project.

2) Community Need
   - Provide a broad overview of the community in which the proposed project is located and a summary of the water resource concerns that the proposed project would address.

3) Project Description
   - Summarize your overall vision and approach for promoting the use of green infrastructure to protect water quality in your community.
   - Describe any efforts to promote green infrastructure to date. How will EPA assistance be used to support existing efforts?
   - Outline the tasks required to complete the proposed project and the anticipated time and materials (for example, hours and any travel costs) you estimate the EPA contractor would require for each task. Specifically identify the tasks that you expect EPA's contractor to perform, and tasks that the applicant will perform.
   - Describe any innovative components of the proposed project, particularly any components that advance sustainable or equitable development principles.
   - Describe the project period (maximum recommended project period is 18 months)

4) Anticipated Results
   - Describe the short-term and long-term benefits to the community that are anticipated to result from the proposed project.
   - Describe how you anticipate building upon the project to continue to advance the implementation of green infrastructure in your community.
   - Describe the level of political and public support for the project and for advancing green infrastructure in your community.

How should letters of interest be formatted?

To facilitate EPA review, letters should be organized according to the four sections described above. Letters should be no more than 4 pages, single-sided (or 2 pages, double-sided). Supplemental materials such as maps and site plans can also be submitted, but are not to exceed 4 pages, single-sided (or 2 pages, double-sided). The total application should be no more than 8 pages, single-sided (or 4 pages, double-sided).

PROPOSAL REVIEW

Letters of interest will be evaluated based on the potential impact of the project. EPA reviewers will gauge the potential impact of the project based on:

- The extent to which the proposed project addresses a pressing community need,
- The extent to which the proposed project builds upon existing efforts and support and the metrics proposed to determine progress,
- The likelihood that the proposed tasks can be completed with available resources within the available time,
- The availability of contributions from the applicant and project partners,
- The likelihood that the applicant will be able to sustain sufficient momentum and support to build upon the completed project, AND
- The extent to which the project represents a unique application of green infrastructure that can serve as a demonstration project for future applications.

A small group of applicants will be asked to participate in a follow-up phone interview with EPA. These calls will be used to further evaluate how well the applicant meets the criteria. Applicants may also be asked to provide additional information and details on the assistance requested. EPA will make final selections following completion of the interviews by May 6, 2012.

EPA CONTACT

Please contact Christopher Kloss (Kloss.Christopher@epa.gov) for questions or clarifications.